



File Code: 1950

Date: December 21, 2018

Dear Forest User:

The Soda Springs Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest (Forest) is seeking public comments on the John Wood Forest Management Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Forest is proposing to improve the overall condition, health and resilience of the forest; utilize and improve timber resources; and improve the forest transportation system within the 5,590 project area. The project area is located in the Johnson Creek and Wood Canyon drainages, located approximately six miles east of Soda Springs, Idaho. The general legal description for the project is: Township 8 South, Range 43 East, Sections 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34; and Township 9 South, Range 43 East, Sections 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9 of the Boise Meridian, Caribou County, Idaho.

Purpose and Need:

There are three overarching needs that caused the Forest Service to propose this action at this time. The need to:

- Increase age-class diversity, reduce conifer density and shift stand composition toward seral species (such as aspen) to increase the resilience of the forest within the project area.
- Utilize, improve, and protect timber resources.
- Improve the forest transportation system.

The purpose of this proposed action is to:

- Increase age-class structural diversity in aspen/conifer and Douglas-fir stands in the project area.
- Increase stand resilience and health by reducing density and shifting composition toward seral species by mimicking natural disturbance processes.
- Maintain or enhance aspen where it exists.
- Emphasize the cost effective production of timber within the land's capability and capacity.
- Develop and maintain the Forest transportation system to the minimum level necessary to effectively manage natural resources, provide user access, and protect capital investments, while providing for user safety and protecting the environment.

Proposed Action

The proposed action for the John Wood Forest Management Project proposes to use a combination of vegetation management activities on approximately 800 acres all of which are within a Forest Vegetation Management Prescription area as identified in the Revised Forest Plan. Approximately half (~400 acres) are proposed for treatment with mechanical harvest. To facilitate harvest approximately 1.2 miles of temporary road would be constructed. All 800 acres



proposed would be treated with a variety of stand tending treatments (pre-commercial thinning, weeding, piling, burning and chopping or mastication). Additionally, several different types of road work are proposed to meet transportation system needs for timber removal, resource concern and public safety. The project proposes to relocate 3.2 miles of existing road to locations that are more sustainable (the current locations would be decommissioned). It also proposes to improve 0.5 miles of existing road and maintain an additional 5.6 miles of road.

Administrative Review:

As the Soda Springs District Ranger, I will be the Responsible Official for the decision on this project. The decision will include whether management activities including: timber harvest, fuels treatments, stand tending and road work, should be implemented in the project area at this time. If so, where, which activities, and what design features, mitigation and monitoring should be applied to the project.

The proposed project is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and is subject to pre-decisional administrative review process (objection process) outlined in 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. In order to be eligible to file an objection, timely specific written comments regarding the proposed action must be submitted during a designated opportunity for public comment. Individual members of organizations must have submitted their own comments to establish individual eligibility to object to the project. Objections received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only. Names and addresses of those who comment and/or file objections will become part of the public record.

Opportunity to Comment:

The DEIS is available for review at the Soda Springs Ranger District Office (410 East Hooper Avenue, Soda Springs, ID) or online at

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/ctnf/landmanagement/projects>.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 45 calendar days following the publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. The publication date in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments in such manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the Final EIS. To make comments useful comments should be specific and clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions. Per 36 CFR 218, only those who provide specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity will be eligible to file an objection.


Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted

anonymously will be accepted and considered, however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

Written comments must be submitted to me: Bryan K. Fuell, District Ranger, Soda Springs Ranger District, via mail to: 410 East Hooper Avenue, Soda Springs, ID 83276; or by fax: (208) 547-2235. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-caribou-targhee-soda-springs@fs.fed.us with the Subject: John Wood Forest Management Project. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Sincerely,



BRYAN K. FUELL

Soda Springs District Ranger

